



# NEWS

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **CHP SAYS THE HEAT IS ON!**

(Sacramento) This summer the California Highway Patrol (CHP) is turning up the heat. CHP officers will be aggressively searching for anyone in a vehicle not wearing a seat belt.

“This isn’t about writing tickets, it’s about saving lives,” said CHP Commissioner Mike Brown. “One of the core missions of the CHP is enforcing traffic safety laws to save lives.”

Currently, 92.5 percent of Californians use their seat belts. As for those who still haven’t gotten the message, Commissioner Brown issues this warning, “By the time you see us in your rear view mirror, we’ve already seen you and whether you’re wearing your seat belt.”

In 2005, CHP officers issued 273,694 tickets statewide to motorists for not wearing a seat belt. Last year 2,671 vehicle occupants lost their lives on California roadways. Only 63 percent of them were wearing their seat belts. By contrast, 92.5 percent of Californians use their seat belts.

During these summer months, teenagers are of special concern. We are troubled by indications that some teens have lately adopted an attitude that you don’t need to wear a seat belt. In an effort to reach these people, the CHP has obtained a \$3.5 million federal grant from the state Office of Traffic Safety.

“To teenagers, we say you have your whole life ahead of you. Don’t cut it short because you chose not to spend the two seconds it takes to buckle up,” said Christopher J. Murphy, Director of the Office of Traffic Safety. The grant will fund “The Seat Belt Challenge,” an educational program that will involve California high schools competing for the highest seat belt usage by its students. The winner will receive a free school party from the CHP.

“Remember the three ‘Don’ts’: Don’t drink and drive, don’t speed, and don’t forget to buckle up,” added Commissioner Brown.

